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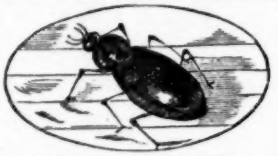

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AB-O'-TH'-YATE ON LIFE INSURANCE.

(From "Ab-o'-th'-Yate's Life Policy.")

(Continued from our last.)

"Well, beaw owd dost' co thysel'?" asked his wife.

"That's hardly sartin'," was Ab's reply. "*Thee* an *me* wurn i' th' same year when we'rn wed; but neaw theau coes thysel' abeaut ten year younger than me; though heaw it's bin browt abeaut rayther bothers me. Women mun have a different sort o' 'rithmatic to men for t' reckon up ages by. But I think I shall see no moore *fifties*, at anyrate."

"Well, then," said Sarah, sorting a few coins out of the stocking-purse, "this'll be as mich as theau'll want; an' theau'll ha' to pay th' same every year till theau—till theau—dees, which I hope theau never will; but Someb'dy's will beside eaurs mun be done, theau knows."

"An' if I *do* lay by my foo'-case, as owd Thuston coes my carcus, theau'll draw a hundert peaund, wilta?" said Ab, regarding the gold and silver as a child does a new toy.

"Ay, if I'm livin'; an' eaur childer if I'm laid by, too, which, considerin' women's ailments, is a thing ut may happen."

"Well, then,—th' next week I shall ha' deawn my wark. Owd Crap con mak' me a new pair o' shoon by that time; an' if I put thoose on, an' th' little blue cooat, an' my best Sunday short-legs, there winno' be a smarter chap seen i' Manchester that day; will there, owd ticket?"

"Nawe, there winno', Ab."

"But I shall ha' to see someb'dy to tell me beaw t' goo abeaut this bit o' th' job."

"Theau con awlus find friends when theau wants a sope o' drink. It'll be strange if theau conno' find one ut'll gie good advice, when it costs nowt."

"Theau'rt reet," replied Ab, with an aquiescent grin; "An' now, I bethink me, there's Sam Smithies"——

"Ah," interrupted the wife, "Sam 'll be puttin' some sort of a trick on thee, if t' axes him. I ha' no' forgetten his pranks wi' thee i' Lunnon yet. But pleease thysel': if he mak's a foo' *on* thee, it winno' be my fawt."

"I'll trust him;" and thus resolved, Ab set about arranging in his mind such preliminaries as would be required for the carrying out of his wife's grand idea; but the children coming in, further conference was suspended until the youngsters had retired to rest, when the question would be re-opened for final adjustment. But how get over the interval, unless he went down to the "Old Bell," which he could not think of doing? He would emulate the crickets, that had already commenced their chirping, and sing the night away. Seizing upon the book which he had laid aside, and, opening it at his favourite passage, he began to sing, in a wild and tremulous but vigorous manner, the song—

"Now westlin' winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
Amang the blooming heather:
Now wavering grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shines bright when I rove at night,
To muse upon my charmer."

It was on a fine spring-like morning, about the close of last winter, that our friend Ab, dressed in his "little blue un," and shod with a pair of musical "high-lows," fresh from the last, was seen swinging his legs jauntily through the gate leading out of "Walmsley Fowt." On his shoulder he carried a clean white linen wallet, containing the finished cut, which he was "bearing home" to the warehouse in Manchester. Whoever has seen a Lancashire weaver on this errand, and noted the preparation made for the journey, has seen something worth remembering.

(To be continued.)

LIVING MEN OF LETTERS.

A series of biographical and critical sketches of eminent authors, under the above title, is now in course of publication in the *Sphinx*. The following have appeared:—

1.—Alfred Tennyson.
2.—Anthony Trollope.
3.—Algernon Swinburne.
4.—Mark Lemon, of *Punch*.
5.—Lord Lytton.
6.—Charles Lever.
7.—George Grote.
8.—George Augustus Sala.
9.—Hepworth Dixon.
10.—Harriet Beecher Stowe.
11.—John Ruskin.
12.—Henry W. Longfellow.
13.—Ralph Waldo Emerson.
14.—Charles Dickens.
15.—Benjamin Disraeli.
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WEEDS FROM THE OCEAN,
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WOUNDED BEFORE THE BATTLE,
By T. G. G.
AB O'-TH'-YATE AND THE LIVERPOOL GENTLEMEN.
WITCHCRAFT,
By Charles Hardwick.
THE MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT,
By Sabina.
POETRY:—
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THE GESU BAZAAR.

MANCHESTER is by this time pretty well used to the elegant phenomena of the bazaar system, and to the chartered rapacities of the pretty highwaywomen, who are the life and soul of this kind of fashionable brigandage. It is true the "authorities" are not entirely unanimous as to the desirability of developing over-much this serviceable, but rather naughty, description of contrabandista. The Bishop of Manchester, for instance, although he lately permitted himself to be, as it were, hustled into a reluctant benediction of one of these picturesque enterprises, nevertheless did lugubriously shake his wise wig at it, and condemned it with faint praise and hesitated dislike in a way quite calculated to flutter the pretty Volscians who had arrayed their dangerous little dovecot in a way irresistible to happily opulent man. But, on the other hand, the Mayor, ever since his coronation, has stood as stoutly and as gaily by our new minions of the moon, as did Prince Hal by his companions at Gadshill, Falstaff and Poins. During the last two years, indeed, the Mayor, if we are not mistaken, has probably opened more bazaars than any public functionary in Britain. Only a few days ago, Mr. Hugh Birley added his parliamentary encouragement to the municipal example of the Mayor, and expressed the opinion that this kind of amateur shopkeeping enabled many persons to aid an excellent institution who were unable to help it in any other way.

But there are bazaars and bazaars. What are we to say of the bazaar which was opened in the Free Trade Hall last Tuesday? It was ushered into notice in the following unfamiliar, if not enigmatical, manner:—"A. M. D. G. The Gesu, Oxford Road, Manchester." And then the advertisement went on to say that stalls would be presided over by —— Eh? O, yes, you may believe your eyes —— by, amongst the rest, Lady Annette de Trafford, Lady Gwendoline Petre, the Marchioness of Londonderry, Lady Milford, the Marchioness of Lothian, Lady Alexander Gordon Lennox, besides ever so many ornaments of the county Catholic families! Here be escutcheons for the envious contemplation of our city knights! Here be armorial bearings to dazzle the vision of Sir Joseph! What a flame is this in which the bullion of Lancashire calico-makers may be glorified! Without doubt, this superb procession of great names must oppress not a little the plebian imagination of commercial Manchester. Who shall dare to construe it into an ostentation of heraldry, unkindly reminding we poor weavers and spinners that we were mostly born yesterday, and that we haven't got any grandfathers? They don't mean it, we are sure; but is it utterly wrong to fear that it is open to that unkind construction? You see, it has been hinted so often of Manchester, that it is always realizing the sneer that Byron once levelled at Moore—"Little Tommy dearly loves a lord." Now we don't say that this is entirely untrue of Manchester, but—perhaps it doesn't quite like to be told so. We don't want to be hypercritical. We are sure that the *grande dames* who graciously yielded to the entreaty to make shopkeeping illustrious in Manchester did not, for a moment, dream that what they were about to do was a sort of condescension that could hurt anybody's feelings. Nor would the astute promoters of the Gesu bazaar ever imagine that they might ruffle the susceptibilities of their possible customers by reflecting too obviously on their general grandfatherless condition. They have learnt by this time, all about the impenetrable character of the commercial cuticle.

In point of fact we dare say that Manchester is too busy to be too fastidious. And yet if one *were* fastidious, one would be almost inclined to hope that, bye and bye, the projectors of our Fancy Fairs may not be obliged, or even induced, to appeal to what, after all, is a somewhat ignoble taste. The temptation to stare at a peeress is very powerful when peeresses are not plentiful, as in Manchester, To be sure it pleases the people who stare, and may not very much hurt the peeresses who are stared at. The chamberlains of the fashionable newspapers are often complaining that great personages are exposed too much to the intrusive observation of well-dressed mobs. It is rather hard on the poor mob, however, at one time to make contemptuous merriment at its vulgarity, and at another time to provide special facilities for its gratification. And yet—and yet, charity covers a multitude of Bazaars, and it would be hard indeed if it did not cover that of the Gesu. We can't always square our manners by the sublime gentilities of the circulating library, but for the sake of a little barbarian vigour now and then, must be content with the barbarian's fashion of exercising it.

OUR YOUNGEST SUBURB.

GORTON.

THE impression that prevails about Gorton is, that it is a rough, uncivilized place, over which the sky lowers in perpetual gloom. We had, ourselves, laboured under that delusion, until a recent visit made by us to the territory showed us our error. We question if many of "our citizens" know much of Gorton, and as to the world at large, it is much if it ever heard of Gorton. The "idea" of Gorton, its *genius loci*, is seclusion. The very place hides itself so much from public view that you never can tell when you are in it.

You may go up Stockport Road from Ardwick Green for some distance, and then be amazed by finding you are in Gorton. But it cannot support publicity for long, and it accordingly retires modestly, in favour of Newton Heath; an overbearing neighbouring state, which has Bismarckianly appropriated a large portion of its frontier, and Gorton is only permitted to peep out upon the turnpike again, somewhere about the Midway House, where humming old ale could formerly be had, the foam of which was nearly strong enough to knock a man's head off. But to judge Gorton from its Longsight aspect would be to take a false view of it. Its associations are more intimately connected with Hyde Road. Gorton had nothing, however, to do with the transaction which made the name of Hyde Road famous, or infamous, according to the reader's pleasure. It lies still beyond the scene of the memoral drama of the Archway, and it is only after passing the 'pikeman's lonely cell, that you tread the Gortonian plains, and find you are passing the boundary line and the paper-staining works of Messrs. Heywood, Higginbottom, and Smith, Limited, at the same time. Surely, they might shorten the name, or else lengthen it out to some purpose. The first part is all very well, but at present,—*desinit in piscem*—why not have continued the H's? Say, Heywood, Higginbottom and Hardicanute, or something of that kind; but *Smith!* In the name of the Prophet—Figs.

After this you seem to be in Gorton at once. Here you have the ten-pound householder, with his companion, the small shopkeeper, in full bloom. Street after street opens on the left hand and discloses rows upon rows of small houses, swarming with people who live—many of them—goodness only knows how? Here we are at "the Junction" as it is called, a corner public-house, which, whatever other uses it serves, certainly serves as a landmark. Have our Alliance friends ever thought of what is to be done when they shall have removed their neighbours' landmarks, by doing away with all the public-houses? Something must be substituted for them, especially in the country, or in such a road as this, where one row of houses is just like another, and, as the nigger said, more so. It doesn't matter that the name should be absurd, or, like the one here irrelevant, only something that is widely and generally known or easily discernible. "And you'll take second turning after th' Red Lion," said Rusticus, directing us once in a wilderness of Cheshire lanes; "you know th' Red Lion?" On confessing our ignorance, he exclaimed, astonished, "What not know th' Red Lion! Why, wheer han' yo' lived?"

Turning to the left, we come into a wide street—Clowes Street, by name—the distinguishing feature of which is a church—St. Mark's, West Gorton. For all this place is not Gorton exactly, but a new human plantation that has lately arisen, and is called West Gorton to signify its difference from the original Gorton, some distance further on. Gorton having a deal of spare land, which from time immemorial had grown large quantities of rushes, the food of sparer cattle, was a few years since looked upon with favour by some people who required as

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Agent for this splendid Cigar. Samples, 4½d. and 6d. each.

THE GESU BAZAAR.

MANCHESTER is by this time pretty well used to the elegant phenomena of the bazaar system, and to the chartered rapacities of the pretty highway women, who are the life and soul of this kind of fashionable brigandage. It is true the "authorities" are not entirely unanimous as to the desirability of developing over-much this serviceable, but rather naughty, description of contrabandista. The Bishop of Manchester, for instance, although he lately permitted himself to be, as it were, hustled into a reluctant benediction of one of these picturesque enterprises, nevertheless did lugubriously shake his wise wig at it, and condemned it with faint praise and hesitated dislike in a way quite calculated to flutter the pretty Volscians who had arrayed their dangerous little dovecot in a way irresistible to happily opulent man. But, on the other hand, the Mayor, ever since his coronation, has stood as stoutly and as gaily by our new minions of the moon, as did Prince Hal by his companions at Gadshill, Falstaff and Poins. During the last two years, indeed, the Mayor, if we are not mistaken, has probably opened more bazaars than any public functionary in Britain. Only a few days ago, Mr. Hugh Birley added his parliamentary encouragement to the municipal example of the Mayor, and expressed the opinion that this kind of amateur shopkeeping enabled many persons to aid an excellent institution who were unable to help it in any other way.

But there are bazaars and bazaars. What are we to say of the bazaar which was opened in the Free Trade Hall last Tuesday? It was ushered into notice in the following unfamiliar, if not enigmatical, manner:—"A. M. D. G. The Gesu, Oxford Road, Manchester." And then the advertisement went on to say that stalls would be presided over by —— Eh? O, yes, you may believe your eyes —— by, amongst the rest, Lady Annette de Trafford, Lady Gwendoline Petre, the Marchioness of Londonderry, Lady Milford, the Marchioness of Lothian, Lady Alexander Gordon Lennox, besides ever so many ornaments of the county Catholic families! Here be escutcheons for the envious contemplation of our city knights! Here be armorial bearings to dazzle the vision of Sir Joseph! What a flame is this in which the bullion of Lancashire calico-makers may be glorified! Without doubt, this superb procession of great names must oppress not a little the plebian imagination of commercial Manchester. Who shall dare to construe it into an ostentation of heraldry, unkindly reminding we poor weavers and spinners that we were mostly born yesterday, and that we haven't got any grandfathers? They don't mean it, we are sure; but is it utterly wrong to fear that it is open to that unkind construction? You see, it has been hinted so often of Manchester, that it is always realizing the sneer that Byron once levelled at Moore—"Little Tommy dearly loves a lord." Now we don't say that this is entirely untrue of Manchester, but perhaps it doesn't quite like to be told so. We don't want to be hypercritical. We are sure that the *grande dames* who graciously yielded to the entreaty to make shopkeeping illustrious in Manchester did not, for a moment, dream that what they were about to do was a sort of condescension that could hurt anybody's feelings. Nor would the astute promoters of the Gesu bazaar ever imagine that they might ruffle the susceptibilities of their possible customers by reflecting too obviously on their general grandfatherless condition. They have learnt by this time, all about the impenetrable character of the commercial cuticle.

In point of fact we dare say that Manchester is too busy to be too fastidious. And yet if one *were* fastidious, one would be almost inclined to hope that, bye and bye, the projectors of our Fancy Fairs may not be obliged, or even induced, to appeal to what, after all, is a somewhat ignoble taste. The temptation to stare at a peeress is very powerful when peeresses are not plentiful, as in Manchester, To be sure it pleases the people who stare, and may not very much hurt the peeresses who are stared at. The chamberlains of the fashionable newspapers are often complaining that great personages are exposed too much to the intrusive observation of well-dressed mobs. It is rather hard on the poor mob, however, at one time to make contemptuous merriment at its vulgarity, and at another time to provide special facilities for its gratification. And yet—and yet, charity covers a multitude of Bazaars, and it would be hard indeed if it did not cover that of the Gesu. We can't always square our manners by the sublime gentilities of the circulating library, but for the sake of a little barbarian vigour now and then, must be content with the barbarian's fashion of exercising it.

OUR YOUNGEST SUBURB.

GORTON.

THE impression that prevails about Gorton is, that it is a rough, uncivilized place, over which the sky lowers in perpetual gloom. We had, ourselves, laboured under that delusion, until a recent visit made by us to the territory showed us our error. We question if many of "our citizens" know much of Gorton, and as to the world at large, it is much if it ever heard of Gorton. The "idea" of Gorton, its *genius loci*, is seclusion. The very place hides itself so much from public view that you never can tell when you are in it.

You may go up Stockport Road from Ardwick Green for some distance, and then be amazed by finding you are in Gorton. But it cannot support publicity for long, and it accordingly retires modestly, in favour of Newton Heath; an overbearing neighbouring state, which has Bismarckianly appropriated a large portion of its frontier, and Gorton is only permitted to peep out upon the turnpike again, somewhere about the Midway House, where humming old ale could formerly be had, the foam of which was nearly strong enough to knock a man's head off. But to judge Gorton from its Longsight aspect would be to take a false view of it. Its associations are more intimately connected with Hyde Road. Gorton had nothing, however, to do with the transaction which made the name of Hyde Road famous, or infamous, according to the reader's pleasure. It lies still beyond the scene of the memorable drama of the Archway, and it is only after passing the 'pikeman's lonely cell, that you tread the Gortonian plains, and find you are passing the boundary line and the paper-staining works of Messrs. Heywood, Higginbottom, and Smith, Limited, at the same time. Surely, they might shorten the name, or else lengthen it out to some purpose. The first part is all very well, but at present,—*desinit in piscem*—why not have continued the H's? Say, Heywood, Higginbottom and Hardicanute, or something of that kind; but *Smith!* In the name of the Prophet—Figs.

After this you seem to be in Gorton at once. Here you have the ten-pound householder, with his companion, the small shopkeeper, in full bloom. Street after street opens on the left hand and discloses rows upon rows of small houses, swarming with people who live—many of them—goodness only knows how? Here we are at "the Junction" as it is called, a corner public-house, which, whatever other uses it serves, certainly serves as a landmark. Have our Alliance friends ever thought of what is to be done when they shall have removed their neighbours' landmarks, by doing away with all the public-houses? Something must be substituted for them, especially in the country, or in such a road as this, where one row of houses is just like another, and, as the nigger said, more so. It doesn't matter that the name should be absurd, or, like the one here irrelevant, only something that is widely and generally known or easily discernible. "And you'll take second turning after th' Red Lion," said Rusticus, directing us once in a wilderness of Cheshire lanes; "you know th' Red Lion?" On confessing our ignorance, he exclaimed, astonished, "What not know th' Red Lion! Why, wheer han' yo' lived?"

Turning to the left, we come into a wide street—Clowes Street, by name—the distinguishing feature of which is a church—St. Mark's, West Gorton. For all this place is not Gorton exactly, but a new human plantation that has lately arisen, and is called West Gorton to signify its difference from the original Gorton, some distance further on. Gorton having a deal of spare land, which from time immemorial had grown large quantities of rushes, the food of sparer cattle, was a few years since looked upon with favour by some people who required as

much space for their works as could be got for as little money as could be given, and finding, in addition to this, that there were also railway facilities for transport that could be made available, they established large works, chiefly of the iron-founding and machinery persuasion, near the Sheffield Railway line, which runs along the northern, or Ardwick and Openshaw side of the township. Here, of course, numbers of men were employed, skilled mechanics, and mechanics without skill, with their handicraftsmen and labourers of all kinds, the hard-working artizan and the cunning artificer—in fact, the British workman generally. As these had to live somewhere, and must have something to eat and drink, houses arose, shops were opened, enterprising brewers set up their various editions of John Barleycorn, and a settled population became a fact. "Ashbury's," a railway-carriage building works, close to the line, seems to have taken the initiative. The railway came to him rather than he to the railway, for it found him, a wheelwright in a small way, somewhere near, and got him to make a few barrows to begin with, and he quickly bowled along the highroad to fortune. The great engineering establishment of Beyer, Peacock, and Co., rival of Sharp's, in locomotives at least, is also here; and there are others of minor importance. A large steel and iron works, not now in work, the result of an unlucky Company, stands empty, as do many neighbouring cottages, whose inhabitants lived, if not upon iron and steel exactly, yet by the earnings of their labour there; the hearthstones are as cold as the furnaces of the iron forges, and the unlucky cottage-owners have to pay the heavy chief-rents that the land-jobbers have fixed them with in more prosperous times, and must wait for tenants until the roar of the furnaces shall again be heard. Somewhere about here dwelt a floor-cloth manufactory, which, like the article it made, fell flat, and come to the ground; and, although winding-up is necessary to the well-being of a watch, a single dose of it is generally fatal to a Company, and if we remember rightly, it was a regular floorer for this Company.

It not being the particular care of anybody to look after the spiritual affairs of this hastily-gathered population, nobody, except a few Primitive Methodists, seems to have looked after it; and as the incumbent or vicar, or whatever he is, had his church up at the old Gorton, a mile or so away, a new church district was made for West Gorton, and a clergyman, Mr. Adams, was appointed to take care of it under the fiction of curate to the vicar, and beg, borrow, or anything but steal the money for a new church, and in the meantime the stipend of Parson Adams the modern, was paid by subscription. Mr. Adams, however, had the misfortune to belong to the moderate High Church party, and, not being willing to dance to the Evangelical tunes of his patrons, found the screw applied by an eminent engineer on his Committee to such a degree that he resigned his charge into Mr. Philpot's care again, and a Professor of Irish Protestantism reigned at St. Mark's in his stead.

Further on we come to what looks like a new street built on an old lane, and so it is. Gorton Lane was an old winding lane long before West Gorton and its works showed their heads. Here we have continued the same disconnected rows of small houses, interspersed with shops, chiefly on the left of the road, and soon we come to what seems to be a small cathedral in course of building. Passing through the boarding we find a half-built church, with side walls of great height, but which have evidently not yet got high enough, as no roof is there. This is flanked by an odd sort of building, like a national school with a dash of the workhouse. This is the Franciscian Monastery. A monastery of real live monks in a suburb of Manchester in the nineteenth century! The unfinished building is the church which the monks themselves are building, with any assistance they can get, and they go on with it whenever they have any money and then stop when it is done. After a while we come to the silent steel works, above spoken of, and chill and desolate they look. Gorton Chapel or church seems the next place of note; we noted it as being the very ugliest church that we ever saw, as to the outside at least, for the inside we didn't see. Before anything more of moment attracts the eye, we find ourselves on the turnpike road again. Sings Thomson—

Ye generous Britons, venerate the Plough!

But here we found it impossible to do so, it being a roadside alehouse, with a couple of cotton-bale laden waggons with the horses out and the drivers in—the house. But further on, at the other side, is the Waggon and Horses. This we enter, partly from the same permission being over the door, and partly from having been here as a youth in Mark Chadwick's time, who brewed and sold good ale. Enquiry after the whilome brewer showed he had been "dead for this twenty year!" "And how a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair!" Close by is being erected, with spire, nave, aisles, transepts, and chancel, in due orientation, a—Ritualist church? No—a Unitarian chapel!

Every step we take seems to bring us more completely into the country. Here a lane to the left looks inviting. Steep down hill we go, past some old-fashioned cottages of the pre-railway period. From one peers an ancient wrinkled crone wearing the old close-fitting calico night-cap, formerly universal in Lancashire. Here are trees and a magnificent three-story mansion of the Anne or early Georgian era. This is High Bank, the residence of Mrs. Grimshaw. Here were Grimshaws before the mule or the spinning-jenny hummed their concerted music, and they live here on their own soil yet. What wild cadet of the family was it that forsook the land for trade, and became head of the firm of Grimshaw, Bagshaw, and Bradshaw?

Next we come to a large cotton factory, not at all like one in Ancoats, but clean-looking, having grass and flowers growing close up to the walls, where the hum of bees might mingle with the hum of machinery. Another lane brings us to Abbey Hey, which is a large new public house, with bowling-green and public gardens in the rear. It seems a strange and out-of-the-way situation for a place of public entertainment, but perhaps the seclusion is considered desirable. Another road leads us back to the reservoir, or Gorton Tank, as it used to be called, to the turnpike again, along which we turn homewards, and passing the still unvenerated Plough, we arrive at a new stone building of the French chateau order of architecture, which we find is the seat of the Legislative Assembly, where the Conscript Fathers of Gorton meet for those harmonious discussions which we see so often chronicled in the local press. Gorton is, it seems, governed, more or less, by a Local Board of Health. There does not seem very much for them to do, as their time seems chiefly taken up with wrangling among themselves, and when tired of that they have a turn at their clerk, who is always being dismissed, or being newly engaged, or having his salary reduced, or being called over the coals for some offence, real or imaginary, so that if any one could be supposed to lead the life of a dog, that clerk we should think would be the "party." And when there are no ordinary meetings, extraordinary meetings are held, such as a caucus meeting to promote the return of new members to the Board, when the Chairman says that "the present Board had distinguished itself by its inability." It seems Mr. George Caudelet, the servant (or master) of the Licensed Victuallers' Society has been Chairman of the Board and has announced his irrevocable intention of retiring and not standing again. Among the new candidates Mr. Flatteley, the Ex-Exciseman, seems to be the favourite, so that except "the de'il comes fiddling through the toon" again, his election may be looked upon as certain. Then Lovers of Truth and Excelsiors attack one another in the newspapers anent Local Board matters, with various degrees of causticity and bad grammar. Here is an extract from the published letter of one of them. "The Board laid an egg and instructed the clerk to hatch it. He did as he was told, but the egg was addled before the Board placed it under his wings. When this discovery was made, the Board declared that the egg was none of its laying. Well I pity the clerk." So do we devoutly. Further on it appears that the clerk is a "scapegoat." So that we have a novelty in natural history—a scapegoat hatches an addled egg which had been laid by a board! What nonsense is all this? Are we in Bedlam, or is Mad Tom come to see the world again?

All things considered, we should hesitate to affirm that, judging from the state of society afforded by these glimpses, Gorton is a nice place to live in. Whether this disreputable freedom is the natural antithesis of the compulsory seclusion practised at the two institutions lower down the road, we cannot say. Mr. Jennison's parrots and macaws would probably talk as sensibly if they could exchange their pole and chain for a seat at the Board, and, if these failed, a few of Captain Lane's probationers might be introduced to show the eternal virtues of silence.

The area of Gorton is over two square miles, and the gross estimated rental is over £75,000. This precious Local Board has the spending of nearly six thousand pounds annually, raised by a general rate of two shillings in the pound. Are there no people who combine character with position in the neighbourhood, and can take the township out of the hands of Excisemen, and publicans and their servants, and adminis-

ter its affairs as if it did form part of a civilized state? The population of Gorton, which a few years since might be counted by hundreds, now probably exceeds 20,000, the vast proportion of them being of course of the labouring class. Few of the newly sprung up towns in the United States can show such a rapid increase.

WANTED, A MAYOR.

WANTED, a Mayor—
In a neighbourhood where
Materials need making the most of:
Where the Councillors are,
As a rule, below par,
And the Aldermen nothing to boast of.

Wanted, a Mayor—
In a neighbourhood where
Are gentlemen mainly a dumb lot:
In which, truth to tell,
Each municipal swell,
For the most part, is rather a rum lot.

Wanted, a Mayor—
In a neighbourhood where
There meanders a beautiful sewer:
Where the people alive,
Who on stinkiness thrive,
Get every day fewer and fewer.

Wanted a Mayor—
In a neighbourhood where
Perfumery never is needed:
For there is such a stench
From that odorous trench,
That Eau-de-Cologne's superseded.

Wanted a Mayor—
In a neighbourhood where
The streets are at intervals flooded:
Where the rowing of boats,
Across improvised moats,
And swimming—are arts to be studied.

Wanted, a Mayor—
In a neighbourhood where
There is the most capital fishing:
For tables and chairs—
From the windows upstairs:
For better there could be no wishing!

Wanted, a Mayor—
In a neighbourhood where
The scope of free will is unbounded:
Because, altogether,
You get your choice whether
You'd rather be poisoned or drownd-ed.

Wanted, a Mayor—
For some Councillors spare,
Who evince such a regard for their inners,
That every fault owned
Will by them be condoned—
Except the not giving of dinners.

Wanted, a Mayor—
With a carriage and pair,
And a large stock of twaddle and platitude:
One who will not forget
That his pains will be met
With the basest and grossest ingratitude.

Wanted, a Mayor!
If there's one anywhere,
Who is willing to give us a call:
Oh, then, let the dunce
Put his cap on at once,
And apply at the Salford Town Hall!

THE PICTURES AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION.

4.—FIGURES AND LANDSCAPES.

THERE are several specimens of that kind of picture which we last year called "figure and landscape;" pictures in which the figures and the landscapes surrounding them are equally worked out, neither being accessory to the other, unity in the development of the work being the first intention. Again, as last year, it is unfortunate that Mr. G. Mason is unrepresented, for his pictures are the most perfect examples of the kind of work we allude to, and one of them would be most useful to refer to in speaking of pictures of this class. However, there is one admirable picture in the Institution which we will cite first, as being the most successful of all that comes under the head of Figures and Landscapes, and that is, Turf Cutters (109), by T. Wade. By no means beautiful, in the ordinary sense of the word, it is certainly one of the few satisfactory paintings on the walls. Complex and original in composition and subject, and certainly original in colour, there is an evenness of execution and a correct balance of form, and light, and shade that make it eminently satisfactory. Considering the subject, and that the effect is strong sunlight, and that everything is most realistically made out, too much praise cannot well be given it. There is no attempt at poetry or style, or indeed grace, for the figures are matter of fact and prosaic, and the landscape in which they are placed is also prosaic; yet the skill of composition and correctness of tone and drawing is such that it is an excellent work of art. It is very seldom that, without showing some unpleasantly ugly fact in all its ugliness, so satisfactory a picture is produced out of such unpromising material.

"As he met her once a-Maying" (30), by F. Smallfield, is a similar picture, so far as it is a painting of commonplace objects realistically; but there is an intention to picturesqueness, or sentiment, or whatever it may be called, in the motive of the figures, which demands more care in selection of the objects to be painted, that they may be beautiful. The colour and tone is very good, and so is the painting, as far as mere imitation goes; but (considering the subject from the painter's point of view), there could be no reason why some parts—the hands of the boy and girl for instance—should be so coarse and unpleasant. They need not have been entirely beautiful, but a better type might have been chosen without incurring the blame of over-idealization. As it is, these are disagreeable, and very unfortunately prominent. Several faults of this kind exist, which go some way to spoil what is otherwise a most careful and promising picture.

From these two pictures, the best of their kind in the exhibition, there is a great jump certainly to the very worst, which is, as in the case of the figure pictures, the work of a Royal Academician. The Gentle Craft (162), by C. W. Cope, R.A., combines most ingeniously almost every fault that it is possible for such a picture to possess. The drawing is absolutely childish, the colour feebly crude, the painting about on a par with the drawing, and tone and composition cannot be said to exist. It is a shame that any line space should be occupied by such a bad picture, for it is not as if it were in any way an encouragement to a young artist which might, but without reason really, be urged were Mr. Cope a beginner and not an academician. It is scarcely possible that there were not at least twenty better works among the "rejected." We have no wish to find fault with the hanging committee, for their difficulties are greater than many people seem willing to admit, but in this case we must say that Mr. Cope's picture, hung as it is, is a standing insult to nearly two-thirds of the artists whose works are hung above or below the line.

Mr. Donaldson's two oil paintings, Margaret Mocked (5) and Afternoon at Treviso (395), are less important, and not equal in merit to what he exhibited last year. His peculiar manner of painting seems growing upon him, and is becoming obtrusive. There is, of course, force of colour everywhere, and in some parts very charming passages; but the beauty of colour is gained by sacrifice of facts in too many cases, and form is disregarded unpardonably throughout. Were Mr. Donaldson less prismatical as to his colouring, and more severe as to his composition of form drawing, he would produce most excellent work.

The Convalescent (145), by C. S. Hicks, is a very pretty picture, on

a very large scale. The waves are pretty, the pebbles are pretty, and the two young ladies are pretty, and so is the painting thereof. There is nothing serious in workmanship or thought in the whole picture; yet it takes up a large portion of what is a very valuable part of the wall. It would be difficult to find the *raison d'etre* of this picture. There seems to have been but little wish to produce a careful landscape, and the figures do not in any way embody the sentimental title in the catalogue.

The Star of Bethlehem (55), by J. Portaels, must, perforce, be classed amongst the figures and landscapes. It is not a figure picture, and still less a landscape, while it can hardly be called historical. As far as conception of the subject goes, it is deserving of praise; at the same time it is open to the objection that it is melodramatic. The effect of solemnity gained by placing the three figures at one end of the canvass, and the brilliant star at the other, the intervening space being a lurid, unreal, and flat space of colour, is clever, but shallow—it is a trick, and soon becomes painfully evident; and as, on examination, the painting is seen to be very slight, and best described as "chic," especially as to the figures, and the colour anything but agreeable. It is one of those pictures that seem striking and powerful at first sight, but which have no really high art qualities. The effect is produced by charlatanic means, and not by the serious and loving work that created the Solomon Eagle, in the water-colour room, or, to make a strange comparison, Mr. Legros' landscape.

Two very clever pictures of cattle and landscape are Going to the Field (61) and Morning on the Downs, Flanders, (132,) by J. H. L. de Haas. They are full of light, good in colour, and the cattle admirably understood and drawn.

Since writing the introductory notice we have, of course, carefully examined the whole Exhibition, and the result is the conviction that in saying it was below the average we were speaking mildly. In concluding our survey we may say that a more disheartening collection it would be hardly possible to conceive, and if next year's be still worse it may not be impossible that a few more seasons hence, if a reasonably severe standard be used, only two or three pictures will be accepted. At any rate, unless something be done, unless some means be taken to obtain superior works, the Council had better abandon the exhibition altogether, for it is no use to any one as it is at present. Perhaps it is at its worst now and will improve in future seasons. It is to be hoped so, for it would be a terrible disgrace if the Manchester Exhibition were to reach a still lower depth of artistic degradation.

TOWN TALK,
AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

THE POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

THE new arrangements for the stamping of light parcels for book post, and the new postal cards, have had their introduction amply vindicated by the fact that, during the first six hours of the new regime, a quarter of a million found their way into the London Post Office. We have not a word to say against the half-penny post. But we wish that the authorities would turn a portion of their attention to the money order department of their office. While the transmission of a letter is only a penny, threepence is the lowest cost at which the smallest sum of money can be sent from one place to another. There is, positively, in this country, and at this day, no means, at once convenient and economical, by which small amounts of money can be sent from one town to another, or particularly from one part of a town to another part of it. The consequence is that people have to fall back on the inartistic and cumbersome expedient of transmitting postage stamps. This ought not to be. It is surprising that so grave a defect in the municipal arrangements of the country has been so long endured. But a change must come some day; and the sooner it does, the sooner it will obviate an immense amount of perplexity and discomfort.

RICHARD III.

Greatness has its penalties. In a certain shop-window in Princess Street, may be seen a veritable model of Charles Calvert, Esq., in a perfect skin of armour, riding on the notable white horse, which was at first so great a source of terror to the super who had charge of it. The likeness is not to be mistaken: nevertheless, the shopkeeper has deemed it advisable to label it, as Artemus Ward used to assure his audiences that certain objects in his scene were horses: the artist had told him so. A rumour is current that the magnificent setting of this piece of *Richard III.*, at the Prince's, will probably be transferred to the Gaiety, London. Another rumour was current, lately: that a dramatic version of *Pickwick* was contemplated by Mr. Hollingshead, the manager of that place of amusement. The rumour arose from the fact that one of his functionaries had been observed purchasing an illustrated copy of the novel, at a neighbouring bookstall.

THE HIGHER BROUGHTON BUGBEAR.

A very considerable length of the best paved part of the Bury New Road has recently had to be taken up, simply and solely to cleanse the sewers of a peculiar, green, and stinking kind of filth, poured into it by certain paper works, which have been for some time the cause of much bad language in the neighbourhood of Broughton. They are, indeed, most heroic paper works and it is with pain that we take up our pen to write at them, for their endurance of misfortune has been Spartan in its resolution. They have perseveringly stunk on through every species of reverse. At first they tried to satisfy the noses of the district by endeavouring to build a chimney. But fast as they built it up, down it tumbled. That brought them into the Assize Courts. Then, at length, they succeeded in erecting a red-brick monstrosity, which gave way in the legs before it was completed; and after slipping about in an undecided way, has finally ingeniously established itself in a position which renders it visible from every window in the neighbourhood. We believe these dauntless paper works have also had their "five bob or a week" at the police court. But still they gallantly go stinking on, slowly but surely establishing their right to stink in perpetuity. We are loth to press upon them harshly, but we don't think that they ought to stop the sewers up, and put the ratepayers to the expense of taking up a mile of paving stones. We think the corporation have a remedy, and that they ought to exercise it. Some nuisances are inseparable from towns, but paper works are not amongst them.

PEEP O' DAY.

Mr. Falconer's drama, *Peep o' Day*, has been revived at the Theatre Royal, and is now being performed nightly by a composite company of London and local actors. Like almost all this author's productions, it is extremely long-winded. The dialogue is prolix and bombastic, interspersed with feeble jokes. There are, however, sensational scenes in it which are very effective in their way, and the play is well acted. The scene of the pattern fair, ending in a fight of the factions, when the entire stage is crammed with well-drilled auxiliaries, is very exciting. We should think that the shindy is almost too real to be pleasant to some of those engaged in it, and we should certainly back the "bould pisantry," with their shilelaghs to thrash the armies of Richard and Richmond at the other establishment all to nothing. The dancing of the lads and lasses is very exhilarating, and many of the audience appear as if they should like to join in it. One pretty girl completely danced Mr. Barsby down. Miss Edith Stuart, of the London and Liverpool theatres, plays the part of Kathleen very nicely, and looks the part to perfection. We have agreeable recollections of this young lady in comedy. We regret that we cannot award equal praise to Miss L. Macdonald, as the gentle Mary Grace. In a moist climate like that of Ireland, even in these days of no bonnets, it is scarcely likely that a young lady would have roamed about the country without any covering to her head, and attired in a low book-muslin dress, with a huge necklace of red beads adorning her neck and bosom. In fact, Miss Macdonald's dress in the first act appeared to be a considerable source of embarrassment to her, and we were kept in a chronic state of apprehension lest it should slip off altogether. Mr. H. Haynes, formerly of the Prince's Theatre, received a hearty welcome on Monday evening, and played the part of Harry Kavanagh with much energy. The scene where he swings himself down the precipice by the branch of a tree, and rescues Kathleen from the grasp of Black Mullins, elicited thunders of applause from the higher regions. This ruffian, and his dastardly employer, Stephen Purcell, are well represented by Mr. R. Dolman, an actor well known here, and Mr. Howard Russell; and the veteran Mr. Barratt resumes his old part of the muscular priest. Mr. Dyas made vigorous efforts to accomplish the brogue, but most of the actors

prudently eschewed the attempt. On the other hand, Mr. Barsby, who represented the English Captain Howard, struck us as speaking with a good Irish accent. The play is well put upon the stage, and has drawn good audiences to the pit and galleries. With the exception of the sensation scenes, it is tedious enough, but one can go out occasionally for a half hour or two of the prosy portions without loosing much. We must not omit to mention Mr. O'Sullivan, who, being "native and to the manner born," plays Barney O'Toole with great effect.

MRS. NISBETT AND THE LOVE CHASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

Sir,—In the notice of the performance of *The Love Chase* by the Haymarket Company, which appears in last week's *Sphinx*, your critic, while he gives due praise to Miss Madge Robertson's remarkable performance of "Neighbour Constance," is unjust to the memory of one of the most accomplished actresses who ever lived, and whose dramatic abilities were only equalled by her extraordinary personal attractions. I allude to the late Mrs. Nisbett, who was, I believe, the original representative of the part. Your critic says: "It is perfectly obvious, from contemporary criticisms of the acting of this comedy, in its first few years, that the then representatives of Constance did not anything like equal Miss Madge Robertson's performance of the part." This was certainly not the opinion of the playgoing public of the day, as being a contingency of likely occurrence, and I should be extremely surprised if those who have seen both actresses would endorse it, for I take it for granted that the writer of the article never saw Mrs. Nisbett, or he would not have ventured to make the above remark. Such critics as Laman Blanchard, Charles Dickens, Douglas Jerrold, and Mark Lemon, who may be supposed to have known what acting was, had the most exalted opinion of Mrs. Nisbett's abilities. She played the part of Constance for years, and always with the greatest success. Her musical, silvery laugh behind the scenes, before she appeared, sent a glow of delight through the audience. Her interpretation of the character was indeed a bright and joyous creation, like her rendering of Rosalind and Beatrice. Indeed, it might be said of her, as was said of the latter, that at her birth a star danced, under which she was born. No higher compliment could be paid to Miss Robertson's Constance than to say that it could be compared with Mrs. Nisbett's. The *Love Chase* was a standing stock piece at the Haymarket Theatre for years, when Mr. Farren, senior, played Sir W. Fondlove; Webster, Wildrake; Howe, Master Waller; Mrs. Glover, Widow Green; and Mrs. Nisbett, Constance. I am inclined to think, with Mrs. Malaprop, that "comparisons are odorous," and fear that, ten years hence, critics will ignore such performances as Phelps's Mac Sycophant, Compton's Dr. Pangloss or Blenkinsop, and, perhaps, even some of the charming impersonations of Miss Robertson herself.—Yours respectfully, JUSTICE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

Sir,—In your notice of the *Love Chase* you state that the representatives of Constance, in the first few years of its existence, "did not anything like equal" Miss Robertson's. Now, if you had witnessed as many Constance's as I have done, you would not venture such a bold and untrue statement. Miss Robertson's is a clever performance as times go, but nothing more. Miss Amy Sedgwick's was much better, and came next to Mrs. Stirling's, but none equalled the original—Mrs. Nesbitt—for whom Knowles wrote the character. Ask old actors or play-goers: they will confirm what I say. Nothing ever equalled Mrs. Nesbitt's delightful banter of Wildrake. Her acting, always delightful from her handsome person and refinement, was in this character superb. Enquire of Mr. Benjamin Webster, who was the original Wildrake, and I believe lessee of the Haymarket, at the time the piece was first played. If you compare the present performance with that first given in Manchester, you may be right, but Miss Robertson is only a clever actress. Her limp and inexpressive countenance would have kept her in the second rank a few years ago. I hope critics won't spoil her with too much praise, and make both her and her husband too conceited, for they are both young and have a good deal to learn. If you could give the original cast in your next, it would be very interesting to many of your readers, and yours obediently, AN OLD STAGER.

Manchester, October 3rd.

MARKET STREET AND ITS TRAFFIC.

HOW long is the present state of things in Market Street to continue? There is a limit to everything, and the present dangerous condition of the traffic is beyond human endurance. As Sidney Smith said of the railways and the bishops, perhaps when the authorities who have the control of the Manchester streets have allowed an alderman or two, with a few common councillors, to be run over and maimed or killed, they will begin to take some steps for the protection of the inhabitants who are obliged to cross Market Street in the course of their daily avocations. It requires considerable dexterity on the part of a young and active man to cross the street at any given part. What constant risks then must old people, women, and children constantly incur. Hairbreadth escapes occur scores of times everyday. Last week we saw a woman knocked violently over by a vehicle, and, on being lifted up and assisted to the footpath, she was so shaken that she could not speak. In fact, accidents are of constant occurrence, and even one of the officers on duty to keep order was himself knocked over not so long since.

So long as there is only one main artery between Victoria Street and Piccadilly, the traffic in Market Street must, of course, be very crowded. But is there any necessity for the present omnibus traffic? We say emphatically there is no such need. There is no absolute necessity for omnibuses traversing Market Street at all. If the greatest convenience of the greatest number is to be considered, the interests of omnibus proprietors, and even the minority of omnibus passengers, must be put on one side. A passenger going from the Exchange to Rusholme, Old Trafford, Brooks's Bar, or any other locality, by way of Mosley Street and Oxford Road, gains nothing in time by getting on the omnibus at the Exchange, as he will walk up Market Street quite as fast as the vehicle travels. These omnibuses ought to start either in Piccadilly or Albert Square. The Cheetham Hill omnibuses have a good starting point in Corporation Street, and no one ever hears of the Portland Street people thinking it a hardship because Cheetham Hill omnibuses don't start at the Infirmary. The Broughton omnibuses, with a few exceptions, start from Victoria Street; and we see no good reason why any of them should go up and down Market Street at all. As for the touting Belle Vue conveyances, they have no business whatever between Piccadilly and Victoria Station. The cheap-trippers who arrive at that terminus will be none the worse for a short walk after their railway journey, and those who arrive at London Road Station will be proportionally convenienced. It is impossible to find a common starting-point which will suit the convenience of everyone, and to make the Exchange a sort of general terminus is absurd. We are quite aware that, a few years since, an attempt was made to keep the omnibuses out of Market Street, but the scheme broke down before it was properly tried. A few people can make a great noise, and we believe that a very short experience would prove to the community the comfort and safety which would arise from the proposed alteration. All parties would gain by it, even the omnibus proprietors themselves, who would save considerably in horse-flesh.

We commend the subject to the consideration of the ratepayers at the approaching municipal elections. The general safety of the public is the first thing to be considered; and if the present state of things lasts, there will assuredly be some very dreadful accidents. It is not many days since a horse in an empty trap bolted at full speed from St. Mary's Gate, and had it not been for the nerve and intrepidity of a powerful policeman, who seized the animal, and was dragged for some distance before he could stop it, it makes one shudder to think

what would have happened a few yards farther on. If the authorities have not the power to make a change, at all events they know where to apply in order to get it.

[MANCHESTER CLUBS.]

THE CHORLTON-ON-MEDLOCK LIBERAL CLUB.

AMIDST the big preparations for the siege of Paris one reads of the conversion of theatres and palaces into hospitals, and of the most extraordinary transformations of a similar character. The most imaginative Parisian would hardly have dreamed that the gilded salons of the Tuileries, or the charmed walls eloquent of Molière and Racine, not to speak of Alexandre Dumas *fils*, would surrender respectively their marble floors and their poetic woes to patriotic surgeons and sisters of mercy, and be the possible scenes of a real drama whose interest has not been transcended in the history of nations. It has been often said that the strangeness of truth greatly surpasses the extravagances of fiction; and, certainly, the unexpectedness of events is constantly putting to shame the supposed foresight and sagacity of that wilderness of wiseacres who regard the world as a poor little sphere, slightly flattened at the poles, that revolves punctually round the sun in an irreproachable but hopelessly matter-of-fact sort of way. But even these worthy people must confess the general dulness of existence is a little relieved by the tremendous surprises of the present autumn, and that, although the "effects" of the picture may be rather "loud," it certainly cannot be called monotonous.

It is surely the effect of a kind of irresistible dynamic force that just now whirls the thoughts of everybody to the capital of France, irrespective of the way in which it is desired that they should travel. We were set thinking about the transformation of palaces and theatres in Paris in the course of a little saunter we were taking on a recent afternoon in Oxford Road, in the vicinity of the new site for the "University of the Busy"—Owens College. Remembering the altered aspect of that most agreeable of Manchester thoroughfares, and the changes that have come over it since All Saints' Church was pleasantly hidden from view by a verdurous wall of noble elms, whose "marriageable arms" environed that "inelegant fane," and sheltered it from a too critical observation, we were wondering what other changes of demeanour would be exhibited by Oxford Road to the polished inhabitant of future Manchester in another forty years. In those days to come, when Mr. Waterhouse has ceased to adorn the land with his incomparable structures, and that great architect has taken his shadowy place side by side with Inigo and Sir Christopher, not to mention the greater masters, who have no renown beyond the joy of their immortal Minsters solemnly and gloriously blossoming in stone, how will the good old John Owens University look?

In the great quadrangular space, the two sides of which are bounded by Coupland Street and Burlington Street, the front by that piece of Oxford Road which connects them, we observed that the Vandal of civilization—or, rather say, its pioneer—the British navvie, with his leather gaiters strapped outside his trousers below the knee, to relieve that garment from injurious tension as he bends to wrestle with his wheelbarrow—we say, we observed him laboriously engaged in razing the ignoble dwelling places which have to make way for the temple of learning, and converting them into——say, building materials. The houses, or—to use the genteel expression—residences in front of Oxford Road, have, it appears, their fate of demolition deferred until the builders require the ground. These houses have a probable respite of two or three years. In the meantime there has been an exodus of the inhabitants of some of the doomed houses, who have doubtless sought more tranquil and permanent abiding places. Pausing in front of these once suburban abodes, and trying to reconcile ourselves to their disappearance, we perceived over the door of one of them, high up on the cornice, an admirably painted sign, announcing the building to be now dedicated to the uses of "The Chorlton-upon-Medlock Liberal Club." It seems that we have not yet survived the age of political clubs. It was this refulgent signboard, replete with information as to the present vocation of the edifice before us, that set us thinking about the vicissitudes of buildings, public and private equally—in Paris as in Manchester. The house is of the old-fashioned Manchester mansion order, square, substantial, and spacious, and although bearing a certain air of almost stately comfort, nevertheless utterly matter-of-fact, and decidedly innocent of ornament, excepting the ornament that time and nature can always so bountifully bestow. We should guess, for half a century at least, nature has been taking especial care of certain noble hawthorns growing in front of the house and glorifying it. Just now these hawthorns bear their harvest autumn crimson. We could not help wondering if the myrmidons (we mean the gentlemen with the leather gaiters) of Mr. Waterhouse, would spare these trees to lend a soft and refreshing grace to the great pile destined to soar beside them. Pray, think of it, oh! architect, and spare a beauty that even your magic would be powerless to replace.

Having paused long enough before the Chorlton-upon-Medlock Liberal Club to induce several young persons of an inquisitive disposition to stop and gaze at the building as if a raging conflagration might be expected to break out at the upper windows any moment, and fleet messengers might be wanted to fetch a fire-escape, it occurred to us that if the manager, or secretary, or custodian of the Club were of a mild and communicative temperament, we might possibly be shown over the premises. We did not suppose that there could be anything new about a Club, so we were prepared *not* to be surprised. Having explained our wishes to a studious looking gentleman in spectacles, of an urbane and gracious aspect, who, by the way, looked as if he were much accustomed to the contemplation of the Precession of the Equinoxes or other absorbing phenomena, we entered on a survey. Capital Entrance Hall, wide and spacious; floor covered with that soft noiseless fabric ornamented with an elegant Greek border. "Wide enough for a procession four abreast," we remarked. This first room to the right is the business or Committee-room. A table covered with writing materials and circulars, all trim as a little bank parlour or a dentist's operating room. "This is a quiet time of the day with us," (it was the afternoon), said our Cicerone, "and there are few in the Club, and nobody as you see in the Committee-room." This room to the right hand as you enter is the News-room. A handsome cheerful apartment fronting Oxford-road. On the big table of polished pitch-pine lay the *Times*, *Telegraph*, *Daily News*, the Manchester daily newspapers, *The City News*, *The Sphinx*, *Punch*, miscellaneous magazines *Chambers' Journal*, *Engineer*, and some illustrated papers. War Maps on the walls invited attention to the movements of those terrible belligerents. Arm-chairs surround the tables, and all is light and pleasant and wonderfully speckless. On the wall of the News-room, as in every other apartment on the premises, visitors are enabled to study the Spartan character of the "Liberal" commissariat. It is announced in each room, on a framed notice headed "Liberal Club," that "Refreshments" can be had as follows:—Cup of tea, 2d.; Coffee, 1½d.; glass of milk, 1½d.; plate of bread and butter, 2d.; chop or steak, 9d.; sandwich, 2d.; lemonade or soda water, ginger-beer, 1½d.; cigars, 2d., 3d., or 4d. If it be true that luxury causes the fall of nations, it is not likely that the ruin of England will ever be laid at the door of the Chorlton-upon-Medlock Liberal Club.

Presently we were ushered into the Smoke-room, a fine apartment, the window looking out into what has evidently been the grounds of the house. The room is furnished with an abundance of arm chairs and small tables. Drafts and dominoes and little cigar trays on the tables indicate the intention of the room. Here are assembled the Liberal smokers, who after analysing the miraculous strategy of Moltke and blowing aside circling clouds from their own harmless artillery, might grow calm over the mild complexities of drafts or the bloodless embarrassment of double sixes. Beyond the Smoke-room is the Refreshment-room, a plain apartment, simple and suitable enough. The kitchen is just the sort of ample affair usually seen in substantial suburban residences, but specially fitted in this case, we should imagine, with a fine range of cooking apparatus, apparently big enough to cook chops for a considerable Prussian contingent. This department (and indeed every other, we believe, when our studious cicerone happens to be preoccupied with the Precession of the Equinoxes) is administered by the bright and cheerful better half of our guide and philosopher.

"And now, sir, if you would like to look at our Billiard-rooms we will go up-stairs," said our companion. Cannons to left of them, cannons to right of them, we murmered to ourselves inaudibly, as we saw

on either hand of the floor to which we had ascended the boards of green cloth dedicated to the harmless engineering of contending ivory. In either Billiard-room we found a capital table for billiards and one for bagatelle. Clear and clean and bright, but not perceptibly differing from other rooms devoted to similar uses. Around the table and against the wall, were the usual raised seats for spectators of the game, and handy for use lay the paraphernalia of cues and the like. "Would you like to have a game?" enquired our guide, good-humouredly. We happened to answer him in the language of Othello, which, perhaps was more or less appropriate, "Sir, were it my cue to fight, I should have known it without a prompter!" Our philosopher smiled compassionately. "Frankly now, can you explain the secret affinity between the game of billiards and bagatelle, and the prosperity of what has been called in Manchester, the United Liberal Party?" "I cannot," said he promptly, "any more than that between those kinds of diversion and the politics of the *Manchester Courier*." "Billiards" he pursued, "have no politics, any more than Cotton is said to have, but the game serves, equally with Cotton (when the good familiar creature is well used) to improve our banking account." "In our case", our friend went on, "the profits" of the tables although the charge for play is very moderate, renders our club very largely, if not quite, self-supporting, which, in the case of any club, is, you will admit, an excellent thing to do."

We expressed our antipathy to people who submitted to have their political principles pampered gratis. "And, now," remarked our friend, whom we somehow kept mixing up in our minds mysteriously with the Astronomer Royal—"And, now," said he, "I think we have seen all that I can show you, except the quoiting and skittle ground outside."

As we descended to the scene of those familiar and manly pastimes, we observed, through the staircase window, immediately beyond the quoiting and skittle ground, a number of brawny persons in their shirt-sleeves, girded below the knee with narrow thongs of leather. They were busy, in company with a mortar mill, driven by a well-conducted steam engine, of limited dimensions, at the foundations of Owens College. The mortar mill seemed to reel round its useful but distracting sphere of action in a way to gratify those members of the animal kingdom who were *not* now engaged in that description of employment. We found the quoit and skittle ground not specially notable, except that there was plenty of elbow-room, and the place seemed suitable for that sort of recreation. An elderly pear-tree or two and one or two fine hawthorns conveyed a hint of ancient rurality, pleasant enough to see. We first glanced at the Astronomer Royal's private library, which seems to have chosen a corner of the spacious kitchen for its private residence. Ricardo, Adam Smith, Stuart Mill, and Shakespere seemed alternately to have allured our guide's attention.

In reply to other enquiries, we learnt that the Club-house was open from half-past eight o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock at night; that the terms of subscription range from one shilling a quarter upwards, and that the number of members whose names and addresses are on the register is somewhere between 250 and 300.

"But the club is very young yet," said our friend, "quite an infant Hercules; the winter evenings, now rapidly approaching, will greatly enlarge our register; and the ceremonial or formal opening of the building has yet to take place in a week or two." After expressing our thanks and adieux, and admiring for a minute or two at the front door the fine screen of foliage that admitted glimpses only of the 'buses careering past alternately from Cheadle and from Market street, we found ourselves pacing Oxford Road in our usual leisurely and contemplative manner.

"What are our deductions?" Our only deduction is, that we spent an hour very agreeably in the Chorlton-upon-Medlock Liberal Club.

POSTAL QUERIGRAMS.

Why is the Postmaster a clever economist?—Because he can make a halfpenny go as far as a penny.

Why is the capture of Paris like the new halfpenny stamp?—Because its "on the cards."

Why are post-card messages like coat-tails?—Because they ought always to be at the back.

FISH FARMING IN CUMBERLAND.

A VISIT TO TROUTDALE.

WE have no intention in this sketch of entangling the reader in the novelties and niceties of aquaculture. Interesting as the principles and doctrines involved in it may be—especially as related to the increased production of food—we pass them over, and propose, merely, to take a crumb from the loaf, a grain from the mass, as a specimen, and give him only a superficial glance at pisciculture, by carrying him to a little fish farm in Troutdale, Cumberland.

As we walk towards the water our *compagnions de voyage* may like to learn why such establishments have become necessary. In thinly peopled regions *feræ naturæ* may, perhaps, successfully struggle for existence against the trapper or the hunter, but as communities become organised, and population grows more dense, this gradually becomes impossible. As a matter of course terrestrial animals become extinct sooner than aquatic—the larger and more important being eagerly sought after. In our own land the boar and the wolf have long since disappeared, whilst in the Highlands and the north of Devon a few deer live only by sufferance; and it is much to be doubted whether the species which are grouped together under the name of game would have any present existence had it not been for the protection afforded them by the exercise of the rights of property. In the great Transatlantic Republic the bison is fast disappearing from the prairies, and even the salmon is growing daily more scarce in such mighty inland waters as the Saint Lawrence and the Mississippi. What wonder, then, that the pigmy streams of a country so densely peopled as our own should practically have become barren water farms. Not only are the majority of our rivers well nigh exhausted, but dismal tidings reach us from the sea, where, to take a single example, the oyster has nearly been dredged out. The principle cause of all this, unquestionably, is over-fishing, and, as regards our inland waters, pollutions and obstructions must be added. Such, in brief, is the condition of our fisheries; and this brings us to the remedy—restocking and nursing. But, practically, these remedies are not of general application, since the great majority of our rivers and lakes, not being the property of one individual, nor welded together in a common interest, cannot, consequently, be under a single harmonious management. To this diversity of interests is due the small amount of public benefit hitherto derived from the various fishery acts which have become law during the last few years. In our inland waters, persons who have rights, as well as those who have no rights, have done their utmost to kill, but have seldom thought of cultivating. Unfortunately, we all know the result: day by day the stock has become less and less, till, at length, men are beginning to see that if our waters are not cultivated one great source of our food supply will be lost. But this digression must cease, for yonder is Troutdale, in which the experiment of aquatic farming is being fairly tried.

According to our ideas of the word, the dale looks like anything but a dale, being a mere rift in the hills—a gorge—a narrow glen, sloping down from the high land above and terminating in a swampy delta, through the centre of which flows a tiny stream of crystal water that a few hundred yards below makes its way into the southern end of Derwentwater. This is the fishery. To the uninitiated in such matters it would require much faith to accept the statement as fact. The place looks more like a brickfield upon which some enthusiastic speculator has just commenced business. There is a long, low shed of sixty-five or seventy feet in length, and near it about half-a-dozen shallow tanks varying from two feet to six feet in depth, and this is all. To appreciate the operations carried on here we must look at them more closely, and in order to begin at the beginning we will walk into the shed already mentioned.

Raised about three feet above the shingly floor are six wooden troughs, each extending the whole length of the building, but without any compartment or division whatever; mere rivulets in short, in which the eggs of the char—the fish to which the proprietors at present chiefly turn their attention—are hatched. Along the inner surface, about two inches from the bottom of these little streams, strips of wood are nailed, and on these a number of glass grilles, each looking something like a minature ventilator in an office window, are placed. On these the spawn is carefully placed, the water turned on, and the first step in the process of artificial fish hatching commenced. To suit the alpine habits of the

fish, a stream of very low temperature has been wisely selected. The coldness of the water renders the operation somewhat long, about a hundred and twenty days being required to bring the fish out of the the shell, when this point has been reached we see the advantage of the glass. The outer covering of the egg of the char is said to be more tough and more tenacious than that of any other British fish, and the weak little creatures struggling into independent existence have a hard tussle for life, finding no little difficulty in freeing themselves from the shell. The rough edges of the glass assist to cut or tear the membrane, and this being accomplished, the infant char drops into the water below. For the next seventy days the young brood are nourished by the contents of a sac or bag attached to the abdomen, and as soon as this has fallen off, artificial feeding commences. When sufficiently strong, the fry are removed to the tanks placed outside the building, each being about sixty feet long and eight or nine wide, with a constant supply of fresh water running through them. Here the fish are fed alternately with curds and bullocks' liver beaten up to a fine paste. As they increase in size, greater space becomes necessary, and as growth advances they will be removed into deeper tanks.

The growth of the char at first is very slow. Our last visit to the premises was paid on the 6th September, and the fish hatched in the previous April were then only about the size of large minnows. They seemed in perfect health, and were, in fact, prize specimens of fish babyhood.

In order to give the reader a succinct account of the method followed in the Troutdale fishery we have somewhat anticipated. The operations here were only commenced in September, 1869, a period obviously late to take full advantage of the spawning season in that year. Nevertheless the shed already spoken off was rapidly run up, the apparatus we have described put together, and about 100,0000 eggs laid on the grilles, of which about eighty per cent were safely hatched. Additional troughs are now being constructed, and it is calculated that about half a million of eggs will be operated on during the present autumn. From the foregoing account it will be seen that the establishment at Troutdale is as yet only in its infancy, but an infancy of greater promise is rarely seen.

In nearly all the water farms at present existing in the United Kingdom, the attention of the managers is devoted almost exclusively to the production of salmon. These fish, after passing a portion of three years—say sixteen or seventeen months—in the parr state, become smolts, when they are turned into the rivers; make their way to the sea, and come back in the autumn as grilse, weighing from three to eight pounds. Minor establishments might be cited where trout—as for example Salmo fario and Salmo ferox—are bred, but even these are only kept in the ponds until they have attained sufficient size to take care of themselves, when they are allowed to pass into the river for which they are intended, and become the nucleus of a future stock. Such establishments are, in the fullest sense of the word, nurseries, and nurseries only, since it forms no part of their design to feed or bring to maturity the fish they hatch. With regard to the salmon it would be impossible to do so, for an inevitable law forbids it; they must migrate to the sea or perish; and as respects the trout, I am aware of no establishment where the premises are sufficiently large to enable the managers to carry out the artificial system from birth to maturity, nor do we know that in this country the idea has ever hitherto been seriously entertained.

Troutdale, however, offers an exception to this rule, for the managers have determined to carry out fish culture to the end. They not only hatch, but intend to rear; they not only feed, but propose to keep the stock on their premises till fit for market; of course, therefore, they have nothing to do with the Migratory Salmonidæ. They propose, for some time to come, to limit their attention to the char, a fish, both from its social habits and great market value, admirably suited to their purpose. About three years will be required to bring this fish to its full growth, that is, to the weight of 1lb. In stock farming it is well known that the time in which animals become fit for the butcher depends largely on the quality and quantity of the food given, and since at Troutdale this is both excellent and abundant, it may reasonably be expected that maturity will be attained in a shorter time than we have mentioned. Such are the present designs of the proprietors in this undertaking; their ulterior views, however, extend to acclimatisation, and at no distant date, probably, we shall see the white fish of America a thriving colonist on the shores of Derwentwater.

The establishment we have been considering is entirely a commercial enterprise, and the skill and economy there exercised are worthy of all imitation. Some idea of its success may be gathered from the following fact:—Owing to the late period at which the works were commenced, the company, as has already been stated, were only able to lay down a very small quantity of ova. Nevertheless, had these been sold during the present summer the receipts would have been sufficient to repay the cost of building and apparatus, as well as rent, wages, food, and the like. From a comparison of what has been done during the first imperfect season with what will be accomplished during the autumn and winter, the reader will be able to judge of the success likely to attend the farm he has visited. Men are willing in the present state of capital to invest in almost every speculation, whether on the earth or under the earth. The Troutdale fish farm, however, suggests a new field for investment—an investment that is sure to pay a large interest. The time is come when the means of supplying animal food for our increasing population has grown to be a question of the last importance; the productive powers of the land, taxed to the utmost, are found to be insufficient for our wants, and we turn, almost of necessity, to the water to meet the growing demand. It will probably be many years before our rivers and lakes will yield their strength, and the present seems to be exactly the time when stock water farms, such as the one we have seen, are really wanted. Various kinds of fish might be bred and reared for market on principles slightly varied from those that have been mentioned. All they could raise would meet a ready sale at remunerative prices, and what more can manufacturers require.

Here our trip ends, and it is to be hoped that amusement will not be the sole result of the visit, but that some may carry away ideas that at no distant date will grow up into similar operations, profitable to themselves and useful to the community at large.

THE BISHOP ON THE THEATRE.

The Bishop is a brave man. If he had not been a Bishop he would certainly have been the kind of soldier to lead a forlorn hope. Difficulties inspire him. A social problem for him exists only to be solved. Praise cannot spoil him, or we should prefer to seem ungrateful. Sidney Smith used to say that he had only one illusion left, and that was the Archbishop of Canterbury. If he had lived now, and in Manchester, the great Canon's illusion would, without doubt, have borne the eminent name of Fraser. The Bishop has just pronounced upon the theatre. The education of the nation's children has long been haunted by a spectre called "the religious difficulty;" the Church itself has been sadly exercised for, heaven knows how long, by the difficulty of "the stage." Probably no greater curse ever fell upon what is called "the religious world," than the curse of the Pharisee. The Pharisee has always frowned upon the drama, and—fate of Zanies and Tartuffe—has robbed the better half of mankind of one of the most effective and magnificent instruments of education devised by the heart and brain of man. Let us place on record the Bishop's courageous words:—

"Theatres may be very instructive instruments of public education. The wise Greeks who went to see the dramas of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripedes, did consider that these were great instruments of national education. And in our own time, such pieces as that of *Richard the Third*, which, he was told, had been produced in Manchester with much magnificence, might be admirable instruments of public instruction."

A CRICKET NOTE.

The "three Graces" have been playing some extraordinary cricket in Gloucestershire. Mr. W. G. Grace hit three sixes off three successive balls. Dr. E. M. Grace scored 211 (not out) in one innings, during which he hit the probably unprecedented number of eleven sixes. Mr. Frederick Grace struck a ball with such force that it went clean through a lady's parasol like a canon-shot.

To Our Readers.—The *Shadow* has been discontinued, and the Proprietor of the *Sphinx* begs to announce that he has purchased the copyright and all interests thereto appertaining.

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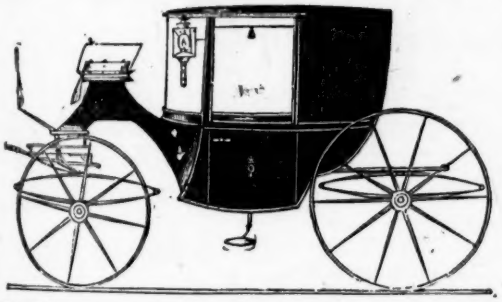

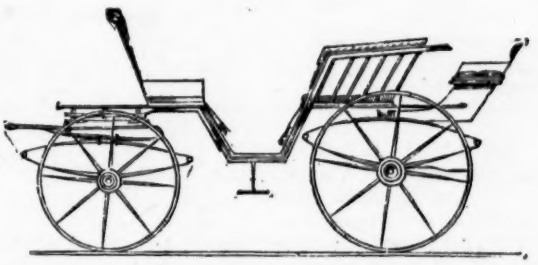

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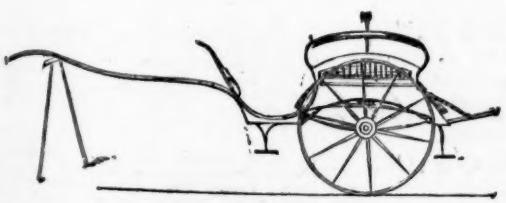

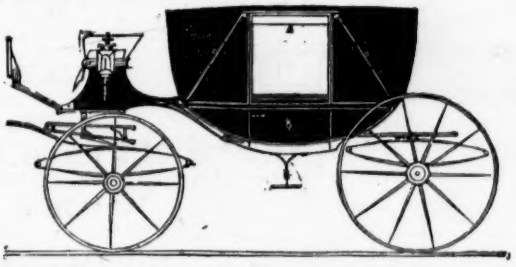

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